NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 7, 2016

Contact: Amanda Thorin: (713) 993-4587 or amanda.thorin@h-gac.com
Becki Begley: (713) 993-2410 or becki.begley@h-gac.com (Media Inquiries Only)

H-GAC PRESENTS INAUGURAL OUR GREAT REGION AWARDS
Awards Recognize Outstanding Local Community Initiatives

The Houston-Galveston Area Council presented the first Our Great Region Awards in early December to recognize outstanding local projects that advance goals and strategies identified in the Our Great Region 2040 plan.

More than 30 local governments and organizations submitted applications covering transportation, environment, economic development, resiliency, housing, and healthy communities. Each project demonstrates innovative quality work focused on building a more vibrant Gulf Coast region.

Seven awards were presented across five categories.

The **Excellence Award**, the highest honor, recognizes projects best advancing the vision of the Our Great Region 2040 plan.
- Port of Houston Authority for the Small Business Development Program and Maritime Education Program

The **Connection Award** honors projects that advance two or more of the Our Great Region 2040 plan’s strategies through innovative partnerships.
- Clear Lake City Water Authority for Exploration Green
- West Houston Association for the Greater West Houston Mobility Plan

The **Diligence Award** honors an implemented project that executed a creative and tenacious approach to overcome challenges to implementation.
- Houston Advanced Research Center for the Double Bayou Watershed Protection Plan
- Harris County Engineering Department for the Net-Zero Energy Restroom Prototype (Honorable Mention)

The **Opportunity Award** honors a project that helps to overcome disparities in access to opportunity.
- The Salvation Army for the Young Adult Resource Center

The **Reach Award** honors a project demonstrating exemplary public participation.
- Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge for the From Crosswalks to Boardwalks Initiative
Our Great Region 2040 is a high-level plan focused on making the Gulf Coast region a better place to live, work, and succeed, as defined by measurable goals, by the year 2040. More information about Our Great Region 2040 is available at www.ourregion.org.

From left, Connection Award, John Branch, President, Clear Lake Water Authority; Connection Award, David Hightower, Past President, West Houston Association; Diligence Award, Stephanie Glenn, Program Director of Hydrology and Watersheds, Houston Advanced Research Center; Diligence Award (honorable mention), Dennis Johnston, Harris County Precinct 4 Parks Director; Opportunity Award, Rafael Sarango, Young Adult Program Manager, Salvation Army; Reach Award, Laurie Lomas Gonzales, Wildlife Biologist, Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge; Excellence Award, Gilda Ramirez, Senior Director of Small Business & Education Outreach, Port of Houston Authority.

Houston-Galveston Area Council

The Houston-Galveston Area Council (www.h-gac.com) is a voluntary association of local governments in the 13-county Gulf Coast Planning Region—an area of 12,500 square miles and more than 6 million people. H-GAC works to promote efficient and accountable use of local, state, and federal tax dollars and serves as a problem-solving and information forum for local government needs.